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## 9.15-SECOND DASH BREAKS BOLT's RECORD, AGAIN

**Usain Bolt's 9.58-second 100-metre dash record stood bettered this year, too, with a 23-yr-old clocking 9.15 secs in a buffalo race**

### NISHANT SHETTY, SRINIVAS GOWDA BETTERED

Kambala jockey Vishwanath Devadiga (23) sprinted through a slushy track in Udupi, taking 0.36 seconds lesser than last year's champion Nishant Shetty, whose dash had clocked 9.51 seconds. Earlier, Srinivas Gowda's 9.55 seconds sprint had brought him social media fame, resulting in the Union Sports Minister offering a nationals trial, which he declined | P7

### ELITE CLUB OF FOUR KAMBALA JOCKEYS

- While kambala and a 100-m sprint are markedly different, the former draws national attention owing to the endurance of the buffalo racers, who sprint 140-odd metres through multiple laps
- Vishwanath joins the elite club of four racers who have bettered the much-vaunted Jamaican sprinter's 100-m record set in 2009

### 3rd try

VISHWANATH MANAGED TO SET THE RECORD AFTER FALLING TWICE

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**MAKING A NEW BEGINNING**

Clockwise from left: Indian and Chinese officers interact on Thursday; and armoured vehicles start moving as part of disengagement in the Pangong Tsu | P11

# Full Pangong pullback expected in two weeks

Rajnath says vacated space on the banks of the lake will be a no-go zone for both sides; disengagement elsewhere later

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

A day after the Sino-Indian disengagement began from standoff positions in Eastern Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday confirmed the pull back in a "phased, coordinated and verified manner" in Parliament, and gave a sense of how the whole process is expected to unspool.

While the Chinese Army will move back to the east of Finger 8, the Indian Army will fall back to Dhan Singh Thapa post, short of Finger 3 in the North bank area of the Pangong Lake. A similar disengagement began on the South Bank of the lake on Wednesday. Full disengagement on both sides of the lake is expected in 10-15 days, a senior officer said.

After the drawdown from Finger 4, Rajnath said, unless a decision is taken otherwise, the area in between will be a no-go zone for both sides. "It has also been agreed to have a temporary moratorium on military activities by both sides in the North Bank, including patrolling to the traditional areas. Patrolling will be resumed only when both sides reach an agreement in diplomatic and military talks that would be held subsequently."

A similar action would be taken in the South Bank area by both sides, he said.

Given the sensitivities involved, local commanders of both sides are meeting twice a day to iron out the wrinkles. India is wary, as a similar disengagement in the past was dishonoured by the Chinese side earlier in the hot spring area, although they had withdrawn from the Galwan Valley. Within 48 hours after this phase is over, Corps Commanders of both sides will meet to work on other positions of the stand-off. P9

**STRUCTURES BUILT AFTER APRIL 2020 TO BE REMOVED**

On the heights India occupied in Rechen La and Razang La on the Kailash Ranges and fortified its positions, Rajnath said structures raised by both sides will be removed.

"These are mutual and reciprocal steps and any structures that had been built by both sides since April 2020 in both North and South Bank area will be removed and the landforms will be restored." He said nothing has been conceded as part of the agreements

# Govt talks tough, says Twitter can't overstep Indian law

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

A day after attacking microblogging platform Twitter for non-compliance, the Centre on Thursday warned social media platforms of strict action if they fail to crackdown on inflammatory content.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Centre is committed to freedom of media, but it was equally concerned about the security and law and order in the country. Naming Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn, Prasad said: "We respect your good work. You bring FDI, but you have to respect the laws of the country."

On Wednesday, the ministry had come down heavily on Twitter, saying social media platforms should not have different yardsticks to confront developments at, say, Capitol Hill and the Red Fort. After the Republic Day violence, the Centre had asked Twitter to block over 1,100 handles and posts that allegedly spread misinformation about the farmer protest. These included accounts of journalists, activists, and politicians. Twitter partially complied, saying the demands were inconsistent with the Indian law.

Meanwhile, Twitter's *desi* competitor Koo came under attack from a French expert who claimed it was exposing user data. The app developer quickly rebutted the charge and said user data was very much safe. P17

**We respect social media, it has empowered the common people. Social media has a big role in Digital India programme. However, if social media is misused, action will be taken**

Ravi Shankar Prasad, Information Technology Minister

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# Gushing sludge, water halt Tapovan tunnel floor boring

VINEET UPADHYAY @ Tapovan (Uttarakhand)

WITH a change in strategy failing to deliver, attempts to save 37 workers trapped in the Tapovan hydropower plant tunnel since Sunday following flash floods appeared to be a long shot, as no official or agency could say how much longer it would take to reach them. Ravinath Raman, commissioner of Garhwal division of Uttarakhand said, "At this point of time, no one can tell how much time the operation will take. This is a developing situation and unstable landscape. The response strategy keeps changing according to the developing situation." Also, a meeting in Delhi discussed reports of a lake formation in Rishiganga in the higher reaches. "We will act as per instructions," he said.

The changed strategy to drill into the floor of the tunnel to reach a silt filtration tunnel underneath in the hope that the men were perhaps stuck there, had to be suspended as sludge and water gushed in when they reached a depth of six metres. Earlier in the day, there was high drama as water levels of the Rishiganga and the Dhauliganga suddenly rose, forcing rescuers to suspend operations for two hours. P9

**FLOOD SAFETY**

- Rishiganga valley home to glaciers with subglacial lakes
- Experts point at an ice avalanche leading to release of water from sub-glacial lakes in the Raunthi glacier, for the recent calamity
- They call for further investigation to assess risk from flash floods

## 'Ice avalanche, subglacial lake burst set off flash floods'

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE flash floods in the Rishiganga valley that claimed more than 30 lives, with 204 people still missing, might have started with a "massive ice avalanche", stated Dr Anil Kulkarni, distinguished scientist, Divecha Centre for Climate Change (DCCC), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, in a research note on the Uttarakhand devastation.

"It could be the snow avalanche/landslide downstream, and a release of 1.6 million cubic metre of water stored in subglacial lakes in the Raunthi glacier," added the scientist. The region also has many glaciers with subglacial lakes. "Therefore, further investigation is necessary to assess risk from a flash flood," said Kulkarni.

Glacial lakes are formed when glacial ice melts to form lakes, which are held together by loose debris. A glacial lake outburst flood occurs when the dam for these glacial lakes fails. CONTINUED ON: P7

NATIONWIDE BUST

# I-T raids on Khodays unearth undisclosed income of ₹878 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Income Tax (I-T) Department that carried out search and seizure operations on a major liquor manufacturer group based in Bengaluru on Tuesday has detected a total undisclosed income of ₹878.82 crore.

The I-T sleuths had raided 26 different locations across the country and sources said the raid is connected to Khoday Group, a major player in the liquor business. The taxmen raided the company's beverage manufacturing unit, its offices and also the residence of its chief.

An official release said that the group has a large land bank that is being developed into residential and commercial properties with a Bengaluru-based builder. "The searches have unearthed incriminating evidence relating to concealment of income of over ₹692.82 crore on account of Joint Development Projects with a major builder based in Bengaluru. Also, the group companies have fraudulently claimed expenses amounting to ₹86 crore," the release stated.

**The searches have unearthed incriminating evidence relating to concealment of income of over ₹692.82 crore on account of Joint Development Projects with a major builder based in Bengaluru**

Income Tax Department

"In their liquor business, unaccounted sales amounting to ₹74 crore have been detected from one of their liquor manufacturing plants in Kerala. The group companies have also claimed bogus expenses of ₹17 crore. The Directors of the group have incurred an unexplained expenditure of ₹9 crore attracting the provisions of Section 69C of Income-tax Act,1961," it said.

The raids have also unearthed 'Benami properties' valued at ₹150 crore in the names of their employees and associates. "In total, 35 suspected Benami properties in the names of their relatives and associates valued at over ₹150 crore have been identified. There is also evidence of foreign assets in the name of a director of the group company," it stated.

EXPRESS READ

### Maha Guv not allowed to use govt plane

Mumbai: Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari was denied permission to use a state government aircraft to travel to Dehradun on Thursday, triggering a row and inviting a strong criticism from the opposition BJP which sought an apology from the MVA dispensation over the incident. P10

### Coup: Myanmar stares at curbs

Seoul: A growing number of governments across the world are curbing diplomatic ties with Myanmar and increasing economic pressure on its military over the coup last week. US President Joe Biden said he was issuing an executive order preventing Myanmar's generals from accessing $1 billion in assets in the United States. P11

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# *Hum Do Hamare Do Sarkar*: Rahul take on family planning slogan to bait BJP

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

FORMER Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday sought to spin a famous family planning slogan into a sharp one-liner to attack the government, calling it a *Hum Do Hamare Do Sarkar* (we two, ours two government), saying the country was run by just four persons. Without naming anyone, he claimed the contentious farm laws are meant to benefit big corporate entities alone. The BJP hit back, saying he was possibly referring to his dynasty's *Didi-Jija and two* (sister, brother-in-law and family).

Rahul had sought to link his charge of crony capitalism against the current dispensation with the ongoing farm agitation while participating in the debate on the Budget in the Lok Sabha. Rebutting the prime minister's charge that the Opposition was not specifying what was wrong with the farm laws, he claimed the first one would destroy the *mandis* as anyone could purchase any amount of foodgrains; the second would result in hoarding; and the third would deprive the farmers of judicial remedy. "The farm laws will destroy the rural economy," he said amid protests from NDA, who asked him to speak on the Budget. Though Rahul said he was laying the foundation for Budget debate, he abruptly wound up, calling for a "two-minute silence for farmers who died since the start of the agitation".

ECOSYSTEM REPORT

# *Too hot to handle? Officially, state has no wetlands, Ramsar site*

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AT least 16-17 per cent area of Karnataka are potential wetlands, but officially, the state hasn't got a single wetland or Ramsar site. No initiative has been taken to mark out and declare wetlands, highlighting the negligible protection for Karnataka's rich biodiversity. If wetlands or Ramsar sites are declared, they require stringent conservation measures.

This fact emerges in the report 'Wetlands Ecosystem: A Sensitive Landscape of Unorganised Non-Administered Services', which has been accepted by the European Journal of Applied Sciences and is to be released by February-end. The report was prepared by UV Singh, retired Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer and member of the National Green Tribunal Committee, and Deepthi Hebale, research scholar, Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, at Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

A bird's-eye view of the Ranganathithu Bird Sanctuary near Mysuru | UDAYSHANKAR S

According to Wetland Rules 2017, wetlands and Ramsar sites (wetland sites designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental environmental treaty by UNESCO, 1975) should be outside forest areas.

However, in Karnataka, the state wetland committee is not even notified. Besides, government bodies have been unable to convince locals on what is permitted and prohibited, once an area is declared as wetlands.

Forest officials point out that in most cases, ministers and government departments are also not convinced on the ecological responsibilities that follow declaration of rivers, lakes and sites as wetlands.

"At present, there are 41 Ramsar notified wetlands in India. (But) There is no notified wetland or Ramsar wetland in Karnataka as on date. The need of the hour is to introduce panel provisions with Institutional authority in the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017," the report states.

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